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The History of the great Athenian Lawgiver is so well known and his Character has been drawn with so much felicity, both as a Statesman and a Poet, in the *Observer*, that it would be superfluous in us, in translating what few fragments are left of his writings, to dwell on either subject: **SOLON** was the Poet of Truth; his fancy never led his Judgement captive in any fetters; nor did he dignify disgraceful passions by the march of his numbers. He has not veiled vice, but its deformity and exposed its allurements. The character of the man is the character of the author, and we proceed without further preface to the fragments which remain as a convincing proof of the assertion.

The longest of these is an elegy on the LOVE OF GAIN.; or rather an exposition of the vanity of human pursuits. Solon draws his arguments from fate, which he supposed to be universal and immutable. He seems however to mean, that we are all drawn along by the chain of destiny, but our own fretfulness and anxiety renders its burthen more galling. He had been a merchant in his youth, and entertained (as is manifest in other fragments too) a thorough disgust for avarice, and deep fears of the influence of that passion on the republic to which he gave laws.

I

Μνημοσυνης ϗ Ζηνὸς &c.

Illustrious Nine, whom Memory deathless bare,
Eternal offspring of Olympian Jove,

Fragments of Solon.

Pierian Muses! hear my ardent pray'r,
Grant me the joys that Gods immortal pour!

Fair Fame be mine; let all the born bestow:
So let me hold the tenor of my path,
Lov'd by my friends, and fear'd by every foe,
Blest in my kindness, dreaded in my wrath.
For Wealth I sue; but still by Justice gain'd;
For vengeance deep in destiny lies hid—
The wealth by heav'n vouchsaf'd hath still remain'd
Firm fix'd in its eternal pyramid.

The wealth dishonest fraud unjustly got,
Produc'd in crime, and made the slave of sin,
Unwilling comes by hungry avarice sought,
But brings its direful train of suffering in!

At first a spark, the spreading evil fann'd
Flames broad and high in its consuming sway;
Nor long the works of guilty gain shall stand,
Jove sees the pile and sweeps its pride away.

As when the gale in fury wakes to sweep
The black clouds scattering o'er the azure sky,
Heaves the vast bosom of the swelling deep,
While whelm'd the waving fields in ruin lie—

High to the Gods own throne it rises wild,—
And then again the clear blue heav'n is seen
O'er the wet earth the sun all glorious smil'd
And laugh'd while no black cloud obscur'd
the scene—

Such is the wrath of Jove!—like fickle man,
His hurrying thunder waits not each offen
But the dark soul's deep secrets he can scan
And time shall tear away its feeble fence.

The blow falls slow or quick; if haply death
The laggard stroke of vengeance antedate
The guiltless sons to whom they lent their bre
Atone for crimes recorded still by fate.

Poor changeling man, or good or ill, forever,
In glad prosperity's unsullied hour,
Self Flattery mocks; until the foe appear,
And light wing'd hope resigns her buoyant po

When withering slow beneath disease's hand,
The conquer'd blooming health into his arms;
The coward's soul with fancied fire she warm'd,
And lent the loathsome form a thousand char

The wretch whom long tried poverty hath wor
With many a gay and golden dream she cheats
With wayward power; from home and country torn
One mounts the bark, and golden vision
greets.

On the broad bosom of the untrodden main,
Where monsters sport and storms careering ride,
Urg'd in its sole, absorbing love of gain
His bosom braves gaunt danger in his pride.

Less venturous, this attempts the tangled sod,
Beneath a lord, he drives the crooked plough;
Thro' various labors must another plod
Before the fiery forge with burning brow.

He, by th' Olympian Muses' precepts taught,
Explores and points eternal wisdom's creed,
Or lo. the seer, with all Apollo fraught,
Presages weal or woe in ages hid.

With him the Gods hold converse; vain they gave
Their lore; vain, omen, sacrifice!
And vain Philosophy! thy power to save,
Ye conquer all, Eternal Destinies!

At Pæon's shrine, the all restoring power,
There are who bow; uncertain is their art—
When spreads disease in its untimely hour,
How vain their skill, to bid the foe depart!

Yet oft the the tortur'd frame and bursting head
Have touch'd the leech, and liv'd; and blest the hand;
Nor knew, as hurrying the Destroyer fled,
That fate the lord of all, had giv'n command.

Alternate good and ill, by Fate descend;
And not on Man dependent, good is giv'n;
While danger lurks, where'er our footsteps wen
The event hid darkly in the breast of heav'n.

Oft, by unequal Lot, the industrious prove
Misfortune dark, unlook'd for miseries;
While Idlers, careless, thrive where'er they rove,
By Chance enrich'd, by intuition wise.

Such is the Will of God; but man can set
No bounds to avarice, to unquench'd desire;
He gains the point his wishes sprang to meet,
To distant realms the unsated thoughts
aspire!

Who then our restless race can satisfy?
God gives us wealth; it proves our bane bel
Jove sent it erst in vengeance from on high,
And each man mingles his own cup of woe.

The Second fragment of an elegy is a complaint, respecting the anarchy introduced by rapine and disregard of justice among the Athenians; it was composed probably in the troublesome days of faction; and in the alternate prevalence of parties—when the people were distracted between their esteem for Solon and the influence of Pisistratus, Megacles and Lycurgus, operating in different directions and alternately preponderating.

II

Ημετέρη δὲ πόλις κ

Athena ne'er from fate shall ruin find,
Nor the deep counsels of the immortal mind;
For Pallas spreads her everlasting arms,
The hero Goddess, to protect from harms.
Within lurks danger; where a leaden chain
Binds stupid souls, intent alone on gain;
While avarice goads the ruler's restless breast
And knows no bound, no measure & no rest
No modest joy they feel, in wealth unblest.

* * * *

Nor sacred temples, nor the public wealth
Are free from lawless rapine, basest stealth;
While Justice sees them spurn her hallow'd fane
Remembering slights recorded not in vain,
And in the appointed hour, her empire shall regain.
Hence spreads the cureless gangrene in our walls,
Corruption for its deepest leader calls;
Or Discord fell and slumbering war she cries,
To blast our blooming children's energies.
O then fair city! to thy friends unjust!
Then shall I see, by victor foes oppress'd,

Thy freeborn children sold on foreign plains,
And gall'd & smarting with dishonest chains.

* * * * *

So public sins domestic hearths infest,
Nor bars nor bolts keep out th' unworthy guest;
The towering wall the subtle foe hath scal'd,
In darkness visible, in dreams beheld!
Would that my voice could speak the countless woes
That wait on discord, that injustice knows.
All that is fair and glorious Justice shows;
Around vice her shackles swift she throws.
She smooths the rough, quells pride & violence binds,
And gives the seeds of evil to the winds;
Uproots each stubborn custom from the soil,
And bids the swelling bosom cease to boil.
The voice of faction owns her mild control;
She tames the throbbings of the angry soul;
Unyielding rectitude and prudence' plain
Bid all things smile beneath her golden reign.

There are two other fragments of the same complexion, which we have not deemed it worth while to translate. One complains of the well known foolishness of the Athenians to listen to their orators, and do nothing with energy. The other we take to be a simple statement of the manner in which he balanced the power; to restrain the ambition of the rich, and the fickleness of the poor. Part is taken from Plutarch's life of Solon, and part from Diogenes Laertius. But Brunck has edited six lines separately and says they refer to the tyranny of Pisistratus.

The following should seem to be a fragment of the warlike Elegy, which Solon delivered in the forum to excite the Athenians to retake Salamis.

III.

Εἴην δὴ τότ' ἐγὼ κ

Would that the vital spark that warms my frame
Had fir'd some perish'd chief of deathless fame!
That ne'er on Attic strand my ears had caught
Loud Rumour's voice with damning accents fraught;
Who tells that many a wretch so base there is,
Who lives, and Salamis dismember'd sees!
To win the much lov'd Island let us hie,
Nor longer bear our load of infamy!

SOLON and Solomon thought alike;—

IV

Οὐδὲ μάκαρς οὐδεὶς κ

No man is blest; we all must meet with woe,
Where'er the circling sun looks down below!

V

Μηδέ μοι ἄκλαυστος κ.

Let me not die, unmourn'd, alone;
Let Love my parting couch attend,
And Friendship's tear, and sorrow's moan,
With the last sigh of nature blend.

The following is preserved entire, by Philo Judæus and Clemens Alexandrinus.

VI

Παῖς μὲν ἄνηβος κ.τ.λ.

In the first term of seven revolving years,
The guardian fence of ivory teeth appears;
In the next cycle, if vouchsaf'd on earth,
The dawn of manhood blushes into birth;
The third the chin's luxuriant crop hath shed,
The swelling limbs with manlier growth o'erspread;
In the fourth age, the ripen'd strength displays
The vigorous fires of manhood in their blaze;
The next beholds him now mature, prepare
For sober joys, and sons his name to bear;
And now, on deepest plans intent, the mind
Hath fleeting bliss and vain pursuits resign'd;
The two succeeding ages, in their flight,
Mark Intellect exalted at its height;

But in the ninth, its powers declining wane,
The tongue of eloquence grows colder then;
And, if the tenth late term his years complete,
Now ripe for death, the fine let him meet.

The following is asserted by the critics to be one of the catches, sung at convivial parties; it is preserved by Diog. Laert. in vit. Sol.

VII

Πεφυλαγμενος ανδρα κ.τ.λ.

While the festive board around,
Know the man who there is found;
Lest his lips should wear a smile,
And his heart a sword of guile;
Lest a heart of blackness dire
Should a double tongue inspire.

VIII.

Preserved by Plutarch.

Ισον τοι πλουτουσιν κ.τ.λ.

They call him wealthy who hath glittering ore,
And sumptuous vestments, with their purple store;
Whom gallant steeds and patient mules obey,
Whose pamper'd appetites bear boundless sway;
To swell whose ease, Art all her efforts tries,
While blooming children in his hall arise;
While, as time flies, new comforts still assuage
The different wants of each succeeding age;

Such mortal wealth; and mortal wealth alone;
For stript of all, by Stygian streams we're thrown
No bribe can put to flight our tyrant foe,
No wealth can baffle sickness of its woe,
Sooth bending age, or buy its sorrow'd lord!

IX.

From Diog. Laert:

To Mimnermus saying— +

"Εξηκοντα ετη μοιρα κιχοι θανατου"

If you will hear, and envy not
The soul contented with the thought—
Then sing, in more sonorous verse,
The wish that humbly I rehearse.
"At fourscore years, in ripen'd age,
Let death complete my pilgrimage."

To this, (which seems to be entire, Dalzel tacks the (V Fragm) two lines on death, before translated, and which are mentioned by Plutarch.

A few fragments on God, consisting of scattered lines, and two other sentences, complete the remains of SOLON.

+ See preceding number of the Aeronaut— Fragm. No III.